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Letter dated 2 August 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to submit hereby the attached communiqué of the Government of the Republic of Burundi on Security Council resolution 2303 (2016) (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Anésie **Ndayishimiye**
Chargé d'affairs a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 2 August 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English and French]

Government communiqué following the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2303 (2016)

On 29 July 2016, the United Nations Security Council adopted without consensus resolution 2303 (2016), authorizing the deployment of 228 United Nations police officers to Burundi, on the basis of a proposal made by France.

The Government of Burundi is surprised by the Security Council's hasty decision to adopt a resolution with such serious consequences, as it creates a precedent for other countries due to the fact that Burundi, the country principally concerned, was not consulted, as is customary. Furthermore, some members of the Security Council, including a permanent member, called a meeting in full knowledge of this oversight.

Although Burundi's position on the issue was provided on time through the usual diplomatic channel, curiously it was not taken into consideration in the outcome document prepared by France, the country proposing the draft.

With regard to the deployment of this police force, the Government of Burundi wishes to remind the Security Council that, on principle, any resolution adopted under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations must have the consent of the country concerned, which unfortunately has not been the case.

Consequently, the Government of Burundi rejects any provision of the resolution which concerns sending any force to its territory, in violation of the basic rules governing the United Nations family and, above all, violating its territorial sovereignty.

While initially, over six months ago, the Government of Burundi was in agreement with the deployment of a team of 20 to 50 unarmed police officers to strengthen the capacity of the Burundian police to combat terrorism, there is no longer any purpose for this proposal; it should therefore be reconsidered, as the defence and security forces have complete control of the situation throughout the country.

However, the 200 military observers and experts from the African Union that the Government had accepted remain welcome, with only the memorandum of understanding for their deployment still to be finalized.

If there is still a need for another external force, the Government of Burundi calls on the Security Council to deploy it in Rwanda to the recruitment and training sites for elements intended to disrupt security in Burundi. Existing reports before the Council clearly outline their location and their subversive activities.

Nonetheless, the Government of Burundi reiterates its readiness to cooperate fully with the United Nations on all matters relating to peace, security, human rights and development, but in strict observance of the sacrosanct principle of sovereignty enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Concerning respect for and guarantees of human rights, the Government recalls that its cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is clear, evidenced by the various missions of United Nations experts on Burundi, as well as the establishment of domestic mechanisms by the Government, including the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, currently working closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi.

With regard to the inter-Burundian dialogue, the Government welcomes the significant progress made in both its internal and external components. It appreciates and supports the work carried out under the auspices of Mr. William Benjamin Mkapa, established by the East African Community, and believes that no external interference in its work should be tolerated at the risk of jeopardizing its mission and undermining the mandate conferred on him by the countries of the East African Community.

Returning to the deployment of United Nations police officers, it is worth recalling that this is not the first attempt to arbitrarily impose a foreign force on Burundi. On 17 December 2015, following attacks by terrorist elements on three military camps in the capital, Bujumbura, and on another camp nearby on 11 December 2015, the African Union Commission had proposed, at the insistence of some European Union countries, Belgium in particular, to send a foreign force of 5,000 men known as the African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi, supposedly to protect Burundians, without having consulted the Government or visited the country to determine the need for such an initiative.

In the face of this threat, the Burundian people rose as one to denounce such a humiliating proposal regarding a sovereign country. Nor did the people conceal their determination to defend their country's hard-won independence; fortunately, the Summit of Heads of State of the African Union rejected this proposal.

For its part, the Government of Burundi had been clear in its communiqué of 18 January 2016 in item 8, paragraph 2, that the people of Burundi saw neither the timeliness, the need nor the interest of the arrival on its soil of foreign troops along the lines of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda or Operation Turquoise, initiated by France in Rwanda in 1994; their presence was of no benefit at all for the Rwandan population. The whole world is aware of the tragic outcome, namely, the genocide that took place during this operation, which was as unfortunate as it was unwelcome.

It is therefore morally unacceptable that France seeks to export the experience of the Rwandan genocide to Burundi, when the case on its likely responsibility in this tragedy has not yet been closed, nor the dispute with Rwanda settled.

Consequently, it is out of the question that Burundi would agree to pay for the reconciliation of the two countries by sacrificing its population. For their part, the people of Burundi, already forewarned by the painful experiences of their past, will never allow genocide to be committed on their territory.

In proposing to send a police force to Burundi, France, with the backing of Belgium, which first proposed the idea but is beginning to step aside due to its embarrassing colonial past in Burundi, appears to be overlooking the highly satisfactory evolution in the country's security situation. There have been only

sporadic incursions of terrorist elements from refugee camps in Rwanda, where they receive military training with a view to attacking Burundi.

As was the case in Rwanda in 1994, the deployment of such a force would have no other objectives save dividing the people of Burundi and undermining the cohesion of its defence and security forces, the legacy of the Arusha Peace Agreement and other ceasefire agreements concluded among Burundians.

The Government of Burundi reminds the international community, and particularly the Security Council, that because of this cohesion all attempts to destabilize democratically elected institutions have thus far always ended in failure, and that the deployment of a foreign force would only prepare a rear base for terrorist elements currently kept at bay.

Furthermore, the unilateral adoption of the resolution to send police to Burundi only encourages the destabilizing activities of terrorist groups. Indeed, it is no coincidence that, since the adoption of the resolution was announced, the security forces have captured a group of some 50 terrorists with weapons and military and police uniforms in Rumonge in the south of the country. The group included students still in secondary school who acknowledged that they had returned from military training in Rwanda in order to attack Burundi and disrupt the peace.

This operation can be added to many other actions by the defence and security forces in Burundi, in the context of the disarmament of the civilian population, resulting in the restoration of security throughout the nation, including in areas where there had been unrest, where daily life is returning to normal.

It should be emphasized that this control over the situation is the result of the commendable work of the defence and security forces without assistance or support from any foreign force.

As regards the destabilizing actions of Rwanda in the Burundian security situation, the Government has always made the evidence available to the diplomatic community in Bujumbura and to national and international public opinion whenever criminal groups from Rwanda were captured by the Burundian security forces.

France, which has a very active diplomatic presence in Bujumbura, must doubtless be aware that its embassy regularly submits reports on these events to its Government. Furthermore, the United Nations has already been seized of Rwanda's destabilizing actions towards Burundi, and many have questioned why the proposal to send police officers has not been directed at Rwanda, in order to monitor the recruitment and training camps for terrorist elements that disrupt security in Burundi.

The Government of Burundi takes this opportunity to recall to the Security Council that, over a period of 33 years (from 1962 to 1995) characterized by genocidal violence and massacres with more than a half million victims, there were only two United Nations resolutions on Burundi: resolution 173 (1962) and resolution 1012 (1995): the first recognized Burundi as a Member State of the United Nations, and the second requested an inquiry into the violence that followed the assassination of the first democratically elected President in the history of Burundi, Melchior Ndadaye.

From 2005 to 2016, during the period when Burundi was governed by democratically elected institutions, 16 resolutions on Burundi, including three for the period from 2015 to 2016 alone, were adopted by the Security Council.

Burundians continue to question the reasons for the silence on the part of the United Nations which characterized the first period and the excessive activism observed during the current period.

The Government of Burundi therefore requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to personally look into the underlying reasons behind the relentless efforts of some States, particularly France and Belgium, to single out Burundi among the countries that make up the United Nations family.

For its part, the Government of Burundi is convinced that this sudden mobilization of the countries deeply implicated in the horrors of Burundi's past because of their historical ties is intended to block the work of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is currently in the crucial phase of collecting the statements and testimonies of victims of the tragedies which took place in those earlier periods.

In conclusion, the Government requests the people of Burundi and especially the members of the defence and security forces to remain vigilant and firmly united in the face of this new threat to the unity and hard-won independence of Burundi. We call on the people to avoid distractions and redouble their efforts towards development and combating poverty, the real enemy.

Bujumbura, 2 August 2016
The Secretary-General of the Government and
Government spokesperson
Philippe **Nzobonariba**

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